

The Commands of Christ

Sermon # 2

“Follow Me And I Will Make You Fishers of Men”

Matthew 4:19

Last Sunday evening we began a new series based on Christ words found in the Great Commission (Matt 28:20) which stated *“and teach them to observe all the things that I have commanded you.”*

You will remember that we looked first at the Great Commission and where Jesus said in Matthew 28:19. *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

The central core of the purpose of the church is outlined in these verses. There we discovered that the three components of the Great Commission are; Evangelize, Incorporate and Disciple.

First, Jesus says *“go, therefore and make disciples of all nations.”* We have to reach them with the gospel, we have to evangelize.

The second thing Jesus says that we must do is *“... baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”* In the command to *“baptize”* we see the importance of not only reaching the lost with the message of the Gospel but the need of incorporating these new believers into the body of Christ. The final part of the Great Commission could be called discipleship, *“... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”* The word *“teaching”* here means *“instruction.”* This is to be instruction in *“observing”* or *“keeping”* the commands of Christ. Then we asked ourselves, *“But just what is it that we are to teach these new believers in Christ?”* In a sense discipleship is being conscious of the *“all those things commanded by Christ?”* In the first sermon we considered Jesus’ first command as found in Matthew 4:17, which was *“Repent for the kingdom of God is at Hand.”*

Now We Need To Consider His Second Command Which Is:

“Follow Me And I Will Make You Fishers of Men” (Matt 4:18)

Tonight we want to turn to Matthew 4:18 and find the second command of Christ, *“And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen (19) Then he said to them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (20) And immediately they left their nets and followed him.”*

Now underline in your Bible the words of verse 19, *“follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”*

The command *“follow me”* (in the Greek an adverb of place expressing a command) is simple, *“your place is following after me.”*

Joseph Stowell (pastor of the Moody Church) identified our problem of the modern church well when he said, *“We have become quite happy to call ourselves Christians with little or no thought of following”* Paul Harvey said, *“We have drifted away from being fishers of men to being keepers of the aquarium.”*

In seeking to understand this command I want us to ask and answer five questions?

1. What Does it Mean To Follow Jesus?

“Follow me” is not the invitation to be saved, it is the call of the believer to service. It is no small decision to follow Jesus. It is possible to have heard the Lord’s teaching and still not be a disciple, to be a camp-follower without being a soldier, to be a hanger-on in some great work without pulling one’s weight.

To follow Christ is to set aside our own goals and pleasures and to embrace the purposes for which God created us. Those purposes are: to know Him in a personal way and to make disciples of others by teaching them all of Christ’s commands. All those who truly follow Christ must exchange their affections, goals and priorities for his.

When Jesus called Peter and Andrew their goal was to be successful fishermen. In asking them to forsake this goal, he commanded them to follow him and He would “make them fishers for men’s souls.” Jesus did not simply command His disciples to become fishers of men but rather He promised to make them fishers of men.

2. How does Fishing for Men Relate to Following Christ?

The common image of a fisherman in our day is of a man with a fishing pole casting a lure into the waters of a stream or a lake. However, such was not the case when Jesus called his disciples. They caught men with nets and by experience they found that their best fishing took place at night. We know that this is true by looking at Luke 5:5, when Jesus told Peter to cast his nets on the other side of the boat he said, *“Master we have toiled all night and caught nothing never-theless at your word I will let down the net.”*

How did they fish at night? They used a very powerful and effective method, light. Fish were attracted to light.

3. How are to we compare fishing to reaching people for Jesus?

Jesus uses this same effective method to draw people to Himself. John tells us that Jesus said (8:12), *"I am the light of the world, He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life."*

Just as fish are attracted to the disciples light, God wants people to be drawn to His light shining through His people. The light of every believer is the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives. Paul stated in his second letter to the Corinthians (4:6-7), *"For it is God who command-ed light to shine out of darkness who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, (7) But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power of God may be of God and not of us."*

We are not the light we merely reflect the light of Jesus.

4. What does it require to follow Jesus?

It was a call that required complete and immediate attachment for every else. Peter and Andrew *"left their nets"* (v. 20) suggesting that they left their present occupation. James and John *"left their father"* (v. 22) suggesting that following Christ takes precedence over even maintaining close proximity to our family. The requirement for following Jesus are not the same for everyone. For some it means leaving their present occupations to follow him. For others it means a willing to leave family connections and being close to family. But for everyone it is a willingness to exchange their affections, goals and priorities for his.

Listen careful to the statement I am about to make because I do not want you to misunderstand me. The worse thing in life may not be that we fail. The greatest failures occur when we succeed in areas that are not God's will for our lives and are not true to the clear teaching of scripture, success that keep us from pursuing God's real plan for our lives. The worse thing in life is not failing but succeeding in a worldly pursuit having left Christ out of our lives.

5. What is the single most important thing we can do as Christians?

When we learn that some one is dying what is the single most important topic on our minds. *"Are they saved?"* What this should remind us of is that what really matters in life is what we are most concerned about at death – whether or not people know Jesus Christ. When someone is dying nothing else really matters doe it?

There have been times in the life of every Christian when he/she recognized that the greatest thing he could do with his life was to get someone else to Christ. It may be this evening that Christ wants you to recommit yourself to reaching someone for Christ. Perhaps it is someone that you have given up on? Have you ever really stopped to realize that Jesus wants you to be someone whose heart is moved to reach out to the lost people around you? In order to accomplish this goal in life would you be willing to

- Lay aside your personal ambition and plans in order to fully follow Christ.
- Purpose in your life to better reflect the light of Christ to those around you.
- Look for and take opportunities to share with others what Jesus has done for you.

Jesus said *“Follow me and I will make you Fishers of Men.”*